comdes internship guide

ARTC4310 PRACTICUM **INTERNSHIP**

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The Comdes Internship Course

The ComDes internship/practicum is an opportunity for students to work in a design or advertising related business and receive university credit for their experience. If the business meets the criteria for credit, an internship course counts for 3 hours credit and replaces an upper-division ComDes elective. You can take the internship twice (with two different companies) and get up to 6 hours credit.

An internship serves as a bridge from the academic world into the professional world. Most often, students walk away from these experiences with the confidence that they'll be able to succeed in their chosen profession. Completing a successful internship allows you to:

- Gain practical knowledge in the field of design
- Get involved in conceptual, design, and production processes
- Learn about the day-to-day business of advertising and design
- Make professional contacts
- Get concrete experience for your resume

WHEN SHOULD I TAKE THE INTERNSHIP COURSE?

Communication Design Majors who have been accepted into the upper division are eligible, however, it's recommended that you wait until you have 1-2 ComDes upper division courses completed before you apply. This will give you a broader set of skills and may help to determine your specific interests in the field of design.

HOW MANY HOURS WILL I WORK TO GET CREDIT?

You must work a minimum of 140 hours to receive credit. Most students exceed this hourly requirement. Your work schedule will be determined by the needs of the employer and your availability.

WHAT CRITERIA DO COMPANIES HAVE TO MEET FOR CREDIT?

- The internship must be in a design-related field and must be a comparable experience to a 4000 Communication Design course.
- The company must maintain a physical address where the intern works—no freelance or off-site work.
- The company must assign a designated mentor that the intern reports directly to. The mentor must be a trained designer/art director.
- The company must pay you at least minimum wage—most interns make between $10—$15 per hour.

Step 1: Choosing the companies

Start by answering these questions to narrow your search.

- Where do you want to work? Austin, Chicago, London?
- What type of design are you most interested in?
- What company is doing the kind of work you aspire to do?

Once you've decided what city and what type(s) of work you'd like to be exposed to, do some research, talk to your faculty, and look at industry publications to find out what's happening in a particular market. Here some additional resources for you:

- *Print Magazine* | *Regional Annual*: The regional annual is a yearly competition/publication that showcases companies by geographic location.
- American Advertising Federation: The AAF holds competitions all over the country and you can download past winner booklets for a large number of markets. These are great resources for award-winning companies across the nation.

After you decide what companies you would like to contact, email them to the Internship Coordinator to make sure that they meet the criteria for credit. Be sure to get the companies approved before you contact them.

Step 2: What you'll need to apply

Be prepared before you contact a company. You'll need a resume and a digital portfolio.

DESIGNING YOUR RESUME

Keep your resume clean, simple, and easy to scan for information. Use bullet points to cut down your word count.

You don't have to over-design your resume, clean, simple typography is fine. Spell-check it and have someone else proof your work before you send it.

THINGS THAT SHOULD BE ON YOUR STUDENT RESUME:

- *Education:* Schools, degrees, expected graduation date, minors, professional workshops or training, etc.
- *Experience:* Only include work experience that is relevant, design or art related positions, management positions, internships, etc.

:: *Technical Proficiencies:* List software skills, operating systems, etc.

:: *References:* Available upon request. These can be professional or academic references.

THINGS THAT COULD BE INCLUDED ON YOUR STUDENT RESUME:

:: *Objective statement:* Write a statement about what you hope to learn rather than what "you bring to the table". Humility is important. Try to make it specific to the companies you are applying to.

:: *Honors:* G.P.A. if it's 3.5 or above, Dean's List, academic scholarships, etc.

:: *Awards or Accomplishments:* Competition awards, shows you've been included in, publications your work has been in, etc. If your list is slim you might combine "Honors & Awards".

:: *Software and programming proficiencies*

:: *Languages:* Can you read/write/speak other languages?

:: *Clubs/Organizations:* List design related organizations first

:: *Exhibitions:* Studio or design exhibitions

:: *Volunteer work:* You might consider including some highlights if it says something positive about you.

:: *Activities:* This could be a good "catch all" if you don't have enough to list things out in other categories. You could include organizations, volunteer work, memberships, study abroad, etc.

:: *Extracurricular:* Is there is an extra thing you do or love that gives the employer a better picture of who you are? Here's an example from a resume that really captured the energy of this particular student:

> *I love traveling to new places full of new people and new ideas. I am an avid rock climber of 10 years and all around adrenaline junky, if it moves quickly, I'm interested.*

:: *Additional skills:* If you have relevant talents you couldn't fit into another category: writing, excellent hand-skills, bookbinding, photography, print-making, drawing, etc.

PORTFOLIOS

Your digital portfolios should be made up of approximately 5-10 pieces of your strongest work. ComDes faculty should be able to help make selections. If you have enough pieces, you can tailor your portfolio to the company you want to work with. Portfolio presentations widely vary, just make sure that the graphics in your presentation doesn't overwhelm your work. Keep it clean and simple, and make your work the "hero" of every page.

If you want to create a portfolio site and don't have the technical skills to build one on your own there are many options for "drag and drop" templates.

If you don't have a web site then you need to have a well-organized PDF that shows your work. The pages of your PDF should all be the same size and have a common design grid. Try to keep your PDF under 5 MG so it's easily emailed.

Step 3: Contacting the companies

Have your portfolios and resume prepared before you contact companies. Many firms have specific guidelines for intern applications so be sure to review each web site for guidelines. If there's no information for how you should apply then you can call them.

If you have to "cold call" a company, meaning you don't know who you need to be talking to, tell them: "Hello, I'm _____, a Communication Design major at Texas State. I'm interested in working with your firm as a creative intern, can you tell me who is in charge of your intern program or who the appropriate person is to talk to?" This will usually get you patched through to a member of the creative team or a studio manager. Frequently you'll be asked to send a digital portfolio and resume prior setting up an interview. If you do not hear back from them, give them a week and then follow up. After 2-3 follow-ups assume that they aren't going to bring you in for an interview and move on.

Step 4: The interview

Be prepared. Find out as much as you can about the company before you walk in door. During the interview you may be asked why you picked their firm. Be prepared to discuss this.

DON'T OVER EXPLAIN YOUR WORK:

The work in your portfolio should speak for itself. You can make a brief statement about what the project is or if you're showing group work explain what your role was. Let the interviewer ask additional questions and direct the conversation.

EXPRESS YOUR INTERESTS:

Most interns are responsible for some day-to-day production room clean-up, filing, image research, etc. That's a part of being an intern. If you have the opportunity, let them know some things that you'd be interested in: sitting in on creative meetings, attending press checks, color proofing checks, working on print/web production, submitting creative ideas for projects, attending photo/video shoots, etc. If your mentor knows your interests, there's a better chance you'll get to participate.

ASK QUESTIONS:

We require you to have a creative mentor to report to during your internship so it's appropriate to ask who you would be assigned to. It's also a good idea to ask what your responsibilities would be as an intern or what sorts of tasks you might be asked to do on a typical day.

Step 5: Schedules/registration/tips

When you get an offer, you'll be responsible for working out a schedule with the company. Make sure you have reasonably large blocks of time available. A MWF or a TTH schedule work very well. Don't set up a schedule where you are only there a couple of hours one day, and a couple of hours the next. The more you're there, the better relationships you'll build and the more work you'll get.

Notify the internship coordinator to have the hold removed for the ARTC4310 Practicum/Internship course so you can register. You must have the internship secured prior to registration. Students often register at the beginning of a semester and the class can't fill up.

SOME TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL INTERNSHIP:

Unless you have an ongoing assignment, every time you walk in the door—ask for work. If your mentor doesn't have anything for you to do, ask if you can talk to the other creatives to find tasks. Remember that it might take time for people to get comfortable enough with you to hand you work. These are things that will help you get established:

- Show up on time, be there as much as you can, work late if needed
- Complete tasks in a timely fashion and to the best of your ability
- Show your willingness to take on additional tasks
- Have a great attitude, regardless of the task you're assigned
- If there are people still working as you're heading out the door, always ask how you can help them.

Step 6: Don't forget the paperwork

Download the internship forms from the TRACS site. Fill out the application page of your paperwork and file with the coordinator as soon as you have your contact information. Track your hours so you can make sure you meet or exceed the 140 hour requirement.

AT THE CLOSE OF YOUR INTERNSHIP:

Your mentor is responsible for filling out your evaluation forms and assigning you a grade. You're responsible for returning the paperwork to the coordinator by the last day of the semester. You will also need to fill out the self-evaluation and turn it in by the same deadline.

4 WAYS TO DELIVER YOUR PAPERWORK TO THE COORDINATOR:

:: Upload a PDF to your TRACS course Dropbox

:: Drop it off at the coordinator's office JCMitte 3107

:: Email a PDF copy to hs04@txstate.edu

:: Drop it by the Art Office and have it placed in Holly Sterling's mail box.

If you have any additional questions or problems, contact the Internship Coordinator via email. Holly Sterling <hs04@txstate.edu>